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Table of Contents

ŀ	Page
DISCLAIMER i	
TABLE OF CONTENTSii	
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONSiii	i
LIST OF TABLESiii	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTSiv	7
EXECUTIVE SUMMARYv	,
INTRODUCTION	
HISTORICAL CONTEXT1	
WHAT IS AN OPERATIONAL RESERVE?4	
OPERATIONAL RESERVE: A CONFLICTING FUTURE ROLE7	,
OPERATIONAL RESERVE: DEMAND SIGNAL8	,
UNDERSTANDING THE RESERVES9	ı
TRUE CHARACTER OF THE RESERVE COMPONENT	3
DECADE OF WAR: JUST CAUSE1	7
OPERATIONAL RESERVE: POST-JUST CAUSE1	8
THE WAY AHEAD: COMPENSATION REFORM19	9
COMPENSATION SOLUTIONS	2
CONCLUDING THOUGHTS24	1
ENDNOTES29)
BIBLIOGRAPHY33	3

Illustrations

	Page
Figure 1. Reserve Component Contributions: FY86 – FY10	.26
Figure 2. Projected Reserve Component Activation Tempo	.26
Figure 3. Continuous Presence Cost: Marine Corps Infantry Battalions	.27
<u>Tables</u>	
	Page
Table 1. Reserve Component Activations Since 2001	.27
Table 2. Manpower and Reserve Affairs SMCR retention surveys: FY10 – 11	.28

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Executive Summary

Title: Operational Reserve: Post-Afghanistan

Author: Major Jason Hill, United States Marine Corps

Thesis: The Department of Defense (DoD) must clearly understand the long-term implications of maintaining an operational reserve after operations in Afghanistan conclude before establishing any future role of the reserve component (RC). In order to accomplish this, DoD must do three things: first, clearly define operational reserve; second, comprehend the true character of the RC; third, establish a replacement feature for the eagerness and patriotism of the current conflict. If DoD fails to achieve these tasks, unintended consequences could emerge that may disrupt America's ability to maintain an all-volunteer reserve force in the future.

Discussion: Ambiguity exists as to the future role of the RC after Afghanistan operations come to an end and force reductions are implemented. Options range from reverting the RC back to its strategic roots to the continued operational use of the reserves. However, a clear definition of an operational reserve does not exist which is essential to properly inform this decision. Consensus in defining an operational reserve remains elusive; Title 10 U.S.C., Department of Defense Directive (DoDD) 1200.17, and Joint Publication (JP) 1-02 all present conflicting guidance. Furthermore, DoD published a Comprehensive Review of the Future Role of the Reserves report that offers no further insight on the subject, and in fact, mirrors the DoDD and the 2010 Quadrennial Review Report (QDR), both of which were published prior to the comprehensive review report. Additionally, DoD must comprehend and acknowledge that reserves are inherently different than their active duty counterparts. DoD should consider the true character of the RC—its part-time nature—and that any modification to the relationship between reservists and the government should benefit both parties, or unintended consequences could emerge that may disrupt America's ability to maintain an all-volunteer reserve force. A potential solution to solve this problem rests in compensation reform. RC compensation reform solves the issue of the increased risk of mobilization inherent in an operational reserve. This solution will likely enable DoD to maintain an all-volunteer operational reserve in the future since it benefits both DoD and the RC.

Conclusion: DoD must understand the fundamental nature of the reserves and offer a solution that benefits both the RC and DoD if it desires to maintain an operational force post-Afghanistan.

Introduction

For over a decade, the Department of Defense (DoD) has benefitted from an eager volunteer reserve force willing to serve, but it has failed to recognize contributing factors that have enabled the unprecedented use of the reserve component (RC) in the Long War (formally known as the Global War on Terrorism). DoD must clearly understand the long-term implications of maintaining an operational reserve after operations in Afghanistan conclude before establishing any future role of the RC. In order to inform DoD's decision, it must do three things: first, clearly define operational reserve; second, comprehend the true character of the RC; third, establish a replacement feature for the eagerness and patriotism of the current conflict. If DoD fails to achieve these tasks, unintended consequences could emerge that may disrupt America's ability to maintain an all-volunteer reserve force in the future. Before examining these tasks, a historical review of the RC's strategic role and subsequent transformation to an operational role is required in order to understand the context of the problem that confronts DoD.

Historical Context

In recent history, two major events have fundamentally altered the American military's RC strategic role: the end of the Cold War and the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. During the Cold War, the RC's strategic role required it to augment the active component if war broke out in the European theatre with the Soviet Union. After the Cold War ended, America's military struggled to find a new "niche", and the RC was used sparingly (with the exception of the Persian Gulf War) until shortly after the terrorist attacks in 2001.

Throughout the Cold War, the American military's RC was incorporated into war plans and was largely seen as a strategic reserve, or an "expansion" force that could augment the active component (AC) should the need arise during a major theatre war. Using reserves had traditionally been planned for war with Russia and using reserves in limited wars were generally politically

avoided. Using reserves in this manner reflected the belief that national interests in limited wars were not as vital as fighting a major war. This distinction is critical to understand since the essence of a major war mandates the use of not only the AC, but of reservists and civilians.² Former President Lyndon B. Johnson recognized this distinction based on his reluctance to mobilize reservists for the Vietnam War. He was keenly aware that large-scale reserve mobilizations were politically impossible even after activating significant reservists after the *Pueblo* affair; he was unwilling to accept the political costs of reaching the mobilization scale that occurred during the Korean War.³

After the Vietnam War, the strategic role of the reserves was validated by the effective integration with the AC during the Persian Gulf War of 1990/1991. After the Persian Gulf War, the RC's strategic role began to fade due to AC force reductions and an increased presence of global threats that the leaner AC could not effectively address. Both factors posed a significant challenge for the nation's military since requirements to preserve American interests exceeded AC capacity. To remain a global leader America needed to decide to increase the AC, limit national interests to AC capacity, or use the reserves in an operational manner. America chose the latter option, as evident by RC participation in Haiti, Bosnia, and Kosovo operations, without consideration of the long-term implications of disrupting the true character of the RC.

The conclusion of the Cold War marked the emergence of dynamic and unfamiliar threats to American national security interests that required a fresh look at America's defense strategy and its military. During the Cold War, American defense strategy included a threat-based military whose doctrine focused on conventional warfare that seemed appropriate since the Soviet Union was the major threat to American interests. In contrast, the post-Cold War environment revealed the appearance of irregular and unconventional threats originating from failed or failing states and non-peer competitors. To address these new security challenges, America needed a new defense

strategy with a capabilities-based military that could function across the range of military operations to include employing the reserves in an operational vice strategic manner.

As a result of post-Persian Gulf War force reductions, the AC could not sustain the high operational tempo required to address the myriad of security challenges around the world that were vital to national security interests. Therefore, reserves were mobilized in a limited capacity and used as an operational force in an effort to provide strategic depth and operational tempo relief to the active component. The use of the reserves in an operational capacity after the Persian Gulf War (Figure 1) clearly demonstrates the origins of the transition from a strategic reserve to an operational reserve, even if the new paradigm was not officially memorialized in doctrine.

Since 2001, reserves were frequently called upon for one main reason: two concurrent wars (Iraq and Afghanistan) overstressed the AC. During this period, RC utilization enabled an unprecedented level of trust and confidence between components since the RC provided significant operational tempo relief to the AC and served alongside their AC counterparts far more frequently than anytime in American history. However, high levels of RC utilization have fostered a negative effect since it has emboldened the United States government to publish guidance directing the future role of the RC as an operational reserve without recognizing the true nature of reserves and that any imbalance may disrupt the reservist's willingness to accept an increased risk of mobilization. This underlying issue must be understood and addressed if America desires to enjoy an all-volunteer operational reserve in the future.

For over a decade, America has been engaged in the Long War and, until recently, fighting a two-theatre war in Iraq and Afghanistan. This period of war is characterized by using the reserves in an operational capacity to a far greater extent than the previous decade. Yet much debate exists in military literature today as to the future use of the reserves, especially as the conflict in the Middle East comes to a close and force reductions are implemented. Some arguments advocate the

continued use of the RC as an operational reserve due to force reductions while others, such as Dr. John A. Nagl and Travis Sharp who state in their "Operational for What?" article published in *Joint Forces Quarterly* that "[T]oday, there is already talk of placing the RC 'back on the shelf', or restoring it to a strictly strategic or 'weekend warrior' status..." In order to bring clarity to the dilemma of the future role of the RC, understanding the meaning of an operational reserve is required. This will allow an informed decision on whether to maintain an operational reserve or to revert back to a strategic reserve.

What is an Operational Reserve?

The term operational reserve has been widely misunderstood for at least the last decade, which has caused a negative effect on high-level decision making as to the future role of the reserves. The debate of defining what an operational reserve is and is not is problematic since it often leads to meaningless conversations that detract from the larger issue: if reserves are going to continue be an operational force, then the arrangement needs to benefit both the reservist and DoD. The purpose of addressing this problem is to expose the wide-range of varying operational reserve concepts in order to develop a common understanding of using reserves operationally, and to fully understand its implications.

To begin shaping an understanding of the problem, a review of the highest level of authoritative guidance is required: Title 10 United States Code (U.S.C.). Although Title 10 U.S.C. does not specifically provide an operational reserve definition, Section 10102 provides insight on the subject:

PURPOSE OF RESERVE COMPONENTS:

The purpose of each reserve component is to provide trained units and qualified persons available for active duty in the armed forces, in time of war or national emergency, and at such other times as the national security may require, to fill the needs of the armed forces whenever more units and persons are needed than are in the regular components.⁵

While the term operational reserve is not mentioned, the authority to use the reserves clearly exists in a broad context, to include allowing DoD to use the RC as it sees fit, operationally or strategically.

Progressing down hierarchal authoritative guidance, Department of Defense Directive (DoDD) 1200.17 and Joint Publication (JP) 1-02 offer no assistance in defining operational reserve, and in fact offer conflicting terminology. JP 1-02 defines Operational Reserve as "An emergency reserve of men and/or material established for the support of a specific operation." It is acknowledged that the context of this definition is centered around operational design and planning. However, the main point is to illustrate that DoD (particularly the military) uses the term operational reserve under a different context and yet offers no formal definition. If DoD and the military continue to use the operational reserve term, it should be formally defined in authoritative guidance under a different context, or the term itself should be modified to avoid confusion. For example, DoD could modify the term to Operational Reserve Force or Reserve Component Operational Reserve. Developing a newly defined term will prevent confusion and clearly articulate what an operational reserve is, in the context of using reserve forces operationally.

DoDD 1200.17 offers a two-fold confusing definition. First, it directs the secretaries of military departments to "manage their respective reserve components as an operational force..."

Second, it defines the use of a reserve component as an operational force as: "The RCs provide operational capabilities and strategic depth to meet U.S. defense requirements across the full spectrum of conflict. In their operational roles, RCs participate in a full range of missions according to their Services' force generation plans."

The directive further posits: "[I]n their strategic roles, RC units and individuals train or are available for missions in accordance with the national defense strategy. As such, the RCs provide strategic depth and are available to transition to operational

roles as needed." The directive presents confusion since it states that the RC will be both strategic and operational; it is unclear if the RC can perform both missions effectively.

Consider the AC's ability to perform conventional force-on-force operations and counterinsurgency operations simultaneously during operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. The "full-time" AC demonstrated that it cannot perform both types of warfare effectively and it may not be prudent to expect the "part-time" RC component to perform two completely different roles. Eliot Cohen supports this view point in his book *Citizens and Soldiers: The Dilemmas of Military Service*, were he posits: "[i]t is virtually inevitable that the army suited for one kind of war will find itself at a disadvantage in the other."

A reserve strategic role implies using the RC for conventional warfare, such as countering a Russian offensive at the Fulda Gap, and a RC operational role implies using reserves across the range of military operations, including conventional warfare, counterinsurgency, humanitarian relief, and security cooperation. Based on Dr. Cohen's statement, if the RC has a strategic role, the RC would not be well-suited for unconventional warfare or an operational role. Furthermore, if the RC has an operational role, it would be deficient in fighting a conventional war, and a RC with both strategic and operational roles would be deficient in both forms of war. DoD should consider the implications of tasking the RC with multiple roles and decide what singular role best suits the RC. The lack of consensus with high-level authoritative guidance and broad RC tasking present serious problems for the services. Unclear and contradictory guidance does not enhance the process of shaping a service, it detracts from it.

Other informal and non-authoritative beliefs attempting to define operational reserves are abound. First, there is a belief that "[o]perational reserves are those that are mobilized for employment or deployment in an operation." Under this definition, all forces not engaged in an actual operation or mobilized for an operation would be considered a strategic reserve. A second

belief dictates that any forces (active or reserve) included in war plans cannot be part of the strategic reserve. The previous beliefs form an interesting paradox; on the one hand, if the criteria for strategic reserve is not employed then most of the active military, National Guard, and reserves would be considered strategic when not engaged in active operations. On the other hand, if the inclusion of units into war plans is the criteria for not being strategic, then most of the American military (AC and RC) would have been considered operational during the Cold War, since almost every asset was included in war plans with the Soviet Union. 14

All of the preceding examples demonstrate that confusion and misunderstanding exist as to the true meaning of an operational reserve, and perhaps explains why it has taken the better part of a decade of war to codify the future role of the reserves. The danger of directing an operational reserve without fully understanding what it means to be operational will lead to unforeseen implications that can have negative effects on the balance of maintaining an all-volunteer reserve force in the future. DoD should make a concerted effort to synchronize the conflicting operational reserve definitions in order to codify the exact meaning of "operational reserve."

Operational Reserve: A Conflicting Future Role

In 2008, former Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates signed DoDD 1200.17, which detailed the future role of the reserves. At first glance, the document appears to bring clarity on the subject; however, it presents confusion by not explaining the rationale for using reserves as an operational force in addition to using conflicting terminology. The former issue was not addressed even when DoD revisited the future role issue when it sponsored a *Comprehensive Review of the Future Role of the Reserves* nearly two and a half years after the DoDD was published. The latter issue of conflicting terminology is illustrated below by examining the DoDD 1200.17 which states: "[I]n their operational roles, RCs participate in a full range of missions according to their Services' force generation plans." DoDD 1200.17 further states that service secretaries are directed to:

"[m]angage their respective reserve components as an operational force...to meet U.S. military requirements across the full spectrum of conflict...ensure that reserve components participate across the full spectrum of missions at home and abroad in providing operational capabilities according to the national defense strategy, their service force management plans, and operational requirements." ¹⁶

The directive addresses what the reserves will do in a general sense, but does not specifically reveal how or why the reserves will be used in this manner. The directive's use of conflicting terminology such as the phrases "full range of missions, full spectrum of conflict, and full spectrum of missions" does not bring clarity to the use of the reserves. Instead, it confuses the matter in its use of multiple forms of terminology that detract from understanding precisely what defines an operational reserve. At this point, progress has been made in understanding the ambiguity that exists in clarifying the future role of the reserves, but what remains elusive is the demand signal and rationale for an operational reserve. A review of the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) provides some insight on the matter.

Operational Reserve: Demand Signal

The 2010 QDR provides indications of the demand signal as to why the reserves are needed in an operational capacity and posits:

[A]chieving the defense strategy's objectives requires vibrant National Guard and Reserves that are seamlessly integrated into the broader All-Volunteer Force. Prevailing in today's wars requires a Reserve Component that can serve in an operational capacity—available, trained, and equipped for predictable routine deployment. Preventing and deterring conflict will likely necessitate the continued use of some elements of the Reserve Component—especially those that possess high demand skill sets—in an operational capacity well into the future. ¹⁷

The 2010 QDR clearly asserts the need for the reserves but neither provides convincing evidence that reserves are the right choice for this future role, nor offers any insight on the implications of changing a fundamentally part-time force to something more than it was intended to do. The 2010 QDR further posits: "[O]ver the coming year, the Department will conduct a comprehensive review of the future role of the Reserve Component, including an examination of the balance between active and reserve forces." The disturbing issue with this statement relates to time, DoDD

1200.17 and the 2010 QDR were both published before the *Comprehensive Review of the Future Role of The Reserves* was published on April 5, 2011.

The *Comprehensive Review of the Future Role of the Reserves* recommended key roles for the reserves and supported DoDD 1200.17 and the 2010 QDR as to how the reserves will be used in the future. However, it is not clear if the review was unduly influenced by the DoDD 1200.17 or the 2010 QDR or coincidently complimented the authoritative guidance. In essence, DoD spent nearly 2.6 million dollars that confirmed existing policy (DODD 1200.17). DoD should have conducted the review and identified the implications of altering a part-time force to something more than part-time (i.e. an operational reserve) prior to publishing official DoD policy on the future role of the reserves to avoid undue influence.

Understanding the Reserves

Understanding reserves—what they are and are not—is a topic of contention that requires clarification in order to reveal the true character of the RC. Comprehending the RC's true character is the critical first step to understand the implications of deviating from a traditional strategic role to an operational role so that unforeseen consequences are revealed and potential solutions can be developed. To facilitate understanding the true character of the reserves, it is important to clarify what comprises the RC and to overcome misconceptions that inappropriately describe the RC. Three misconceptions will be discussed below to illustrate this point. The first misconception lies in the belief that the Army and Air National Guard are not part of the RC. The second and third misconceptions originate from Marine Corps Forces Reserve (MFR) and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs.

There is a widely held belief that the Army and Air National Guard are not part of the RC; numerous reasons contribute to this misconception. For example, the authority for authorizing the National Guard (NG) and the RC originate from different titles of the U.S.C., (Title 32 and Tile 10

respectively); the NG and the RC have separate chain of commands (State Governors/President); the NG and RC are "administered" by different entities (National Guard Bureau/Joint Chiefs of Staff); and the NG and RC have different purposes (domestic response/national defense).

Regardless of existing reasons that contribute to this misconception, the RC includes the NG. This fact is evident in both Title 10 and Title 32 U.S.C. Title 10 U.S.C. posits: "The reserve components of the armed forces are: (1) The Army National Guard of the United States, (2) The Army Reserve, (3) The Navy Reserve, (4) The Marine Corps Reserve, (5) The Air National Guard of the United States, (6) The Air Force Reserve, (7) The Coast Guard Reserve." Title 32 U.S.C. posits:

'[A]rmy National Guard of the United States' means the reserve component of the Army all of whose members are members of the Army National Guard...'Air National Guard of the United States' means the reserve component of the Air Force all of whose members are members of the Air National Guard. ²¹

The purpose of clarifying what comprises the RC is essential to understand the scope of the challenges facing DoD's operational reserve concept, which includes the reserves and the NG. In other words, DoD's failure to understand the true nature of the reserves and the long-term implications of an operational reserve also applies to the NG. Additionally, DoD exhibits little distinction between the NG and the RC; DoDD 1200.17 provides a RC definition that is exactly the same as the Title 10, U.S.C. definition, in addition to directing the NG to be employed in a similar manner as the reserves.

Evidence also suggests that DoD has disregarded the perceived distinction between the NG and RC and between the RC and the AC by employing the RC in a similar manner as the AC for well over a decade. DoD has activated 845,456 (as of April 3, 2011) members of the RC since the 9/11 terrorist attacks (Table 1), which far exceeds RC activations in any conflict in American history. Furthermore, indications exist that DoD will continue to disregard inherent differences between components, since DoD has benefitted from an unprecedented level of patriotism for the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. The *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012*

established authority for the service secretaries to involuntary activate selected reserve personnel for combatant command preplanned missions for not more than 365 consecutive days.²² It also specifies that "[n]ot more than 60,000 members of the reserve components of the armed forces may be on active duty under this section at any one time."²³ It is important to realize that the 60,000 selected reserve activation limitation may seem insignificant when compared to the total authorized RC end strength. However, to put this new authority into perspective, a simple mathematical calculation assists in understanding the significance; the calculation being: total number of activations divided by time. Using rounded figures from Table 1, (845,000 activations) divided by (10.6 years) equals a yearly activation average of 79,716. The new activation authority of 60,000 allows for nearly the same operational tempo that existed for the RC during the previous decade. After the Afghanistan troop withdraw deadline of 2014, RC activations are projected to exceed pre-9/11 activations (Figure 2). It is possible to conclude, that in the absence of patriotism for the current conflict, DoD should be aware that it may have difficulties in recruiting and retention in the RC if reserves are going to be deployed at nearly the same rate as the previous decade when motivation and eagerness is no longer present.

Having now clarified the composition of the RC, examination of a second misconception will facilitate an understanding of varying ideas of what reserves are or are not. For the purpose of this examination, a single service example will be reviewed for brevity purposes. In the broadest sense, reserves have been described as a "force-multiplier" that augment and reinforce the active component, as evident in the Marine Corps reserve's *Continental Marines* magazine which posits: "[M]arine Forces Reserve augments and reinforces active Marine forces in a time of war, national emergency or contingency operations, provides personnel and operational tempo relief for the active forces in peacetime…"²⁴ This statement presents two problems: first, it charges the Marine Corps RC with a dual mission; second, it fails to identify who provides operational tempo relief for the

reserves. More importantly, the "force multiplier" description implies what reserves *do* but fails to identify what reserves *are* (their inherent nature/true character) since augmenting and reinforcing is not strictly a reserve function or capability. Furthermore, a comprehensive review of *Continental Marines* archives and the Marine Forces Reserve website indicate that no literature exists acknowledging the true character of Marine Corps RC.

A third misconception of the reserves pertains to a belief that the reserves possess different or "unique capabilities." The RC has been described as possessing "unique capabilities," as apparent in the 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review directed Review of Reserve Component Contributions to National Defense that posits: "[E]ach component has unique capabilities and strengths that contribute to a strong national defense..."²⁵ The "unique capabilities" claim is a flawed argument for three main reasons. First, the RC's "unique capabilities" are not formally defined in any authoritative or official DoD guidance, which leads to ambiguity in clarifying the RC's uniqueness. Second, the "unique capabilities" argument can be made for the AC since some AC units possess unique capabilities that are absent in the RC (e.g. the Marine Corps has active duty Osprey squadrons and the RC does not). Third, the generalized statement of the reserves' "unique capabilities" is not necessarily true for all services—particularly for the Marine Corps. In the case of the Marine Corps, the "unique capabilities" argument does not hold weight since RC units mirror AC units, with the exception of civil affairs units, which are strictly in the RC. However, this isolated instance does not substantiate the "unique capabilities" argument and, in fact, undermines the validity of the argument. Since only a small fraction of the reserves possess a "unique capability," it cannot define the reserves writ large.

In the Army's case, the "unique capabilities" argument holds greater significance since the vast majority of its logistics capability resides in the RC. Nevertheless, the argument is flawed since some logistics capability resides in the AC. Additionally, the reason for shifting logistic

functions to the RC was not to ensure reserves have "unique capabilities." It was done to free manpower for more active duty combat divisions during the Cold War and to ensure the support of the American people should it go to war in the future (formally known as the Abrams Doctrine).²⁶

A review of the Air Force and Navy RCs further undermines the "unique capabilities" argument for two reasons. First, the Air Force reserve is home to nearly half of the Air Force's strategic airlift capability and about a fourth of its aerial refueling capability" ²⁷ Second, the naval reserves possess both naval aviation and surface warfare capabilities along with a mix of combat and support forces. ²⁸ Both cases illustrate that the "unique capabilities" argument is flawed since both services active and reserve components share similar capabilities.

When pondering unique capabilities, a comparison between services (United States Air Force and United States Navy) or between special operations forces (SOF) and conventional forces, presents legitimate cases that could be made for a "unique capabilities" claim. For example, the Air Force does not possess aircraft carriers, and regular forces cannot perform some SOF missions such as Foreign Internal Defense (FID). It has been previously demonstrated that defining the RC as a "force multiplier" or possessing "unique capabilities" are flawed arguments; both fail to reveal the true character of the reserves.

True Character of the Reserve Component

Cataloging the differences between the service's reserve forces and the NG is a relatively simple task, since so many exist: different missions, tables of organization, tables of equipment, capabilities, and authorities, for example. The hard task is to glimpse beyond the differences that tend to overshadow the commonalities or true character of reserves and national guardsmen. Only after understanding and applying this concept, can any future role of the RC be properly informed by the distinct differences between active and reserve forces. For the purpose of the remainder of

this monograph, the term "reservist" is used synonymously with national guardsman; both the NG and reserves are a part-time force and their true character is exactly the same.

The true character of the RC is a fairly simple concept; it is the part-time nature of reserve service that includes three important considerations: America's reserve force is composed of citizen-soldiers, reserves are generally more expensive than AC forces when mobilized, and reserves have limited opportunities for training.²⁹

The first part-time consideration pertains to citizen-solider status. Nearly all reservists have some form of civilian employment or are attending school full time, and as a result the citizensoldier status has many aspects to consider.³⁰ The first aspect suggests that the reservist's priority rests with his or her civilian job or educational goals, and their willingness to serve part-time in the military is a secondary concern. The second aspect suggests that if a reservists' first priority was serving in the military full time, then he or she would have joined active duty. Since they did not, they have to balance the competing demands of civilian employment (or school) with the demands of part-time service in the military.³¹ The third aspect pertains to disrupting the balance of what it means to be a citizen-solider (i.e. altering the part-time nature of reserve duty) as any modification to this balance will have an effect in the reservist's ability to manage both his civilian and military life. Prior to the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, the part-time standard for reserve status included drilling one weekend a month, two weeks of annual active duty training, and perhaps the chance of mobilization for a contingency once during a career. The departure from this standard over the last decade must be evaluated in order to determine the long-term effects of maintaining an all-volunteer operational reserve force in the future.

The second part-time consideration relates to cost: since reservists work part-time for the military, they inherently cost much less during peace time than their active duty counterparts. The cost benefit compliments America's need for military forces that tends to vary overtime. The use of

the reserves appears to have an attractive surge capacity, requiring paying them full time only when they are needed full time.³² The relative cost of a reserve unit when not mobilized ranges anywhere from one third to one fifth of the cost on an active duty unit, depending on the type of unit.³³ The reason for the low cost is that reservists work only one weekend a month and two weeks during the summer, therefore, compensation costs are significantly less than paying an active duty member who works full time. In regards to equipment, material, and facilities for reserves, cost savings are not as predominant since reservists need these requirements regardless if they work part or full time. Statistics illustrate that if the part-time nature of the reserves is altered, such as increased mobilizations or drill and annual training periods, the cost benefit dissipates and under certain conditions, using reserves actually cost more.

One example of reserve units costing more than AC units occurs when reserve units are used for continuous presence missions. Marine Corps reserve infantry battalions conduct ninety days of pre-deployment training and spend approximately two months to reconstitute and expend accrued leave following their deployment.³⁴ The actual boots on the ground (BOG) period for reserves activated for a one-year period is just over seven months long.³⁵ In order to fulfill deployments over a six-year period, ten reserve units are required due to the activation-to-dwell ratio of 1:5 as opposed to AC units that deploy for a year and then spend three years in dwell status.³⁶ Figure 3 depicts the total 6-year cost incurred to meet continuous presence mission requirements for three options; both options that use reserve infantry battalions costs over a billion dollars more than using four AC infantry battalions.

The third part-time consideration pertains to limited training opportunities for reservists which are undoubtedly linked to the number of days reservists work for the military. Simply put, reservists train far less than AC members, and as a result reservists may initially be less capable and proficient than their AC counterparts.³⁷ The cost savings benefit of the part-time nature comes with

a negative effect of reduced training opportunities that leads to degraded levels of proficiency. To counter this deficiency, an extensive post-mobilization training period is usually required in order to increase reservist proficiency to an acceptable level, while enhancing their skill sets prior to executing a mission. During the Korean Conflict and the Berlin Crisis, many U.S. Army Reserve units required a full year to become ready for deployment.³⁸ In 1968 President Lyndon B. Johnson recalled 39,301 reservists in response to the seizure of the USS *Pueblo* by the North Koreans, but it took three times longer than expected (seven months instead of eight weeks) for the units to reach acceptable levels of readiness.³⁹ The U.S. Army predicted 30 to 40 post-mobilization days were required to declare the 48th Brigade combat ready prior to the Persian Gulf War, when in fact, it was not deemed combat ready until 91 days after call-up just as the Gulf War ended.⁴⁰ During Operation Iraqi Freedom, the average length of time for post-mobilization training for Army National Guard combat brigades was five months.⁴¹ Even with a moderate post-mobilization training period, the reservists may never match the skill level of their active duty counter parts, since active duty members tend to train to mission essential tasks for years.⁴²

There is a tradeoff between the cost savings and benefits of using reserves, due to limited training days and competency level, with the requirement of post-mobilization training periods encroaching on the benefits. The competency level deficiency most likely applies to reservists who do not have a civilian job that compliments their military job, such as infantry. However, there are occasions when a reservist's civilian employment may actually enhance their military job and the capability of their reserve unit, though this is an exception and not the rule. Consider a military police company with the majority of unit members possessing civilian jobs in law enforcement, or a city planner who works in a reserve civil affairs unit, both examples demonstrate civilian experience enhancing military proficiency. Even with these examples, the benefit of enhanced job skills as a result of complimentary civilian jobs is not clear since the type of mission the reservist will

participate in once mobilized may not compliment their civilian job skills. Having now clarified the true character of the reserves, it is beneficial to comprehend how DoD has maintained an operational reserve without understanding the part-time nature of the RC since 2001.

Decade of War: Just Cause

During the last decade, DoD has benefitted from a RC eager to serve its country, an eagerness mainly attributed to support for a "just cause." For the purpose of this monograph, "just cause" is defined as patriotism which motivates military service, such as patriotism and desire for retribution after unprovoked attacks on America, which has served as the catalyst for the RC's willingness to support the Long War. In this context, sustained belief in "just cause" has been relatively rare since the end of World War II. However, evidence suggests that there has been a sustained belief in just cause since the 9/11 terrorist attacks. For example, a review of fiscal years (FY) 2010 and 2011 Manpower and Reserve Affairs (M&RA) sponsored RC retention surveys indicate strong support for the current war, since over three quarters of respondents indicated a desire to remain in the reserves if able to deploy to Afghanistan (Table 2).

Furthermore, the Youth Attitude Tracking Study (YATS) results in 1989-1990 concerned DoD when a steep decline in positive propensity of youth toward the military occurred (the decline coincided with the 1990/1991 Persian Gulf War and surprisingly continued to 1992) in addition to the enlistment propensity of 16 to 18 year olds dropping for the first time since 1984. Manpower officials were distressed by the drops because of an accompanied slump in recruiting. Former Secretary of Defense Les Aspin shared this concern when making a point of noting the drop as a "warning sign" in an address to the U.S. Air Force Academy in 1993. General Maxwell R.

Thurman, former Commander in Chief of the U.S. Southern Command, best summarized American youth propensity drops when he stated, "[W]hen the U.S. was celebrating its Gulf War victory, some of the military's manpower planners envisioned endless lines of eager applicants...the

problem, as it turned out, was the war itself: the lure of the all-volunteer force has always been in its benefits, not in its burdens."⁴⁶ The YATS results, and Aspin's and Thurman's comments all suggest that "just cause" was not present during the Persian Gulf War since Iraq's invasion of Kuwait was not perceived as an imminent threat to American lives or sovereignty, which is a stark contrast to what occurred as a result of the Pearl Harbor attack in 1941 and the terrorist attacks in 2001. Considering the important relationship between "just cause" and the current conflict, DoD should take into account the long-term implications of maintaining an operational reserve without "just cause", and before establishing any future role of the RC.

Operational Reserve: Post-Just Cause

For over ten years DoD has enjoyed an unprecedented level of eagerness in the RC's willingness to enlist, mobilize, and deploy that can be attributed to "just cause" for the current conflict. However, it is unclear if RC eagerness will continue after operations in Afghanistan conclude and the "just cause" has ended. There must be some other reason or incentive to replace this motivation if the RC is going to be used as an operational reserve in the future. If DoD changes or disrupts the part-time nature of the reserves without a replacement feature for "just cause," then DoD has essentially altered the terms of agreement between the seller (DoD) and the buyer (reservist or potential reservist) that only benefits DoD. If DoD desires the same level of willingness in the RC to enlist, mobilize, and deploy in the future, then the terms of the agreement must benefit the buyer (the benefit being the replacement feature for satisfaction derived from self-sacrifice for a "just cause") otherwise DoD will likely have difficulty maintaining an all-volunteer RC. In *Professionals on the Front Line: Two Decades of the All-Volunteer Force*, Edwin Dorn stated:

[T]o attract, motivate, and retain quality people, the DoD must provide a standard of living for its members that can compete with the private sector. If it does not, the services cannot continue to recruit high-quality individuals into the all-volunteer force. Whenever the civilian economy improves, recruiting will suffer unless the DoD maintains an attractive compensation package.⁴⁷

In the case of extended deployments or an increased deployment frequency, the DoD cannot match the private standard, but it can apply the same principle of generous compensation for extended dislocations. Compensation reform is a potential solution that recognizes the part-time nature dynamic of the reserves that benefits both DoD and the RC.

The Way Ahead: Compensation Reform

The current RC compensation structure was designed for a strategic reserve and will not effectively sustain an operational reserve in the future. Compensation reform is required to ensure an all-volunteer operational reserve since it provides a viable solution that replaces the "just cause" feature of the current conflict and benefits both DoD and reservists. On the one hand, current RC compensation appears to be adequate since it has not changed over the last decade and there have no significant changes in recruiting and retention for the RC. On the other hand, the counter argument suggests that high level of RC volunteerism and willingness to deploy was a result of patriotism for a "just cause" in conjunction with tax exclusion status and hostile fire pay in Iraq and Afghanistan.

For example, Marine Corps reservists continued to serve for a "just cause" regardless of their dissatisfaction of compensation levels. A FY-2011 M&RA reserve retention survey illustrates this sentiment by indicating that 65.4% of survey respondents expressed that military pay and allowances are too low and 43.2% of the respondents indicated that low pay and allowances are an influence to leave the military.⁴⁸ In either case, "just cause" and combat-related compensation will disappear after the Afghanistan conflict ends and there are no indications that reserves will receive these benefits in the future, since the most likely missions for the RC is security cooperation in non-hostile areas of operation.

Examination of the pre-Long War RC context is required to further understand long-term implications of an operational reserve and why compensation reform is needed. Prior to the Long War, a civilian had many considerations as to whether he or she would join the AC, RC, or remain a civilian. One key consideration identified in a 2008 Rand Corporation study that influenced the decision process was the risk of mobilization, a civilian asked him or herself the following question: "is the amount of money the government is willing to pay me worth the risk of mobilization?" For many, the answer was most likely yes for those who joined the reserves, since they would probably have only been activated once throughout their entire career, in view of the fact that major activations of reserves only occurred in 1968 and 1990/1991. In contrast, in today's operating environment the answer would most likely be no since reserves are being mobilized far more frequently than during the pre-Long War period without commensurate compensation for the increased risk of mobilization.

As previously illustrated, the Marine Corps retention survey indicated significant dissatisfaction of compensation levels associated with the higher risk of mobilization. However, the DoD has been able to avoid the negative effects of underpaying the RC for an increased risk of mobilization due to the support of the RC for a "just cause." The unprecedented use of the RC during the Long War has required the establishment a deployment-to-dwell target ratio in order to prevent "burn-out" of the RC, which may solve a short-term symptom of the problem but fails to address the underlying compensation issue connected to the increased risk of mobilization. U.S. Senator James Webb agrees with this point when he stated "repeated combat deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan with inadequate time at home between rotations were burning out our troops when I assumed office in 2007...[w]e needed more responsible rotational cycles in place to protect their welfare and their families." The current RC deployment-to-dwell ratio policy is one year mobilized and five years not mobilized, which means a reservist has the risk of being mobilized

three or four times during a 20 year career, and four or five times over a 30 year career. This risk of mobilization has dramatically changed from the pre-Long War standard, which now fails to mutually benefit DoD and the RC. DoD has changed the part-time nature of the RC without recognizing that any change must consider both the government and individual reservists.

It has been demonstrated that the true character of the RC is its part-time nature, and that DoD has altered this feature without benefiting both the government and the RC. Now that the problem has been clearly identified, compensation reform shall be examined in greater detail below. There is a delicate balance between paying reservists too much or not enough. If compensation insufficiently offsets the risk of mobilization, then a person may not enlist; if compensation is too high, then the cost benefit of the reserves dissipates. The latter may actually create resentment by the AC component since AC members do not receive a base pay increase for deploying.⁵¹

Prior to the Long War, reservists in a drill status were "over paid" since they were compensated two days pay for every drill day, which equates to receiving four days pay for drilling one weekend a month. The "overpayment" was sufficient to attract personnel to join the reserves when there was a low risk of mobilization. However, during the last decade there has been a high risk of mobilization and no change to RC pay, which resulted in reserves being "under paid" for the increased risk of mobilization. The "under payment" problem is further compounded when a reservist is mobilized for duty, since he or she no longer receives "double pay." A mobilized reservist is compensated exactly the same as AD service members, unless a reservist is serving on Active Duty Operational Support orders, which is generally a rare occasion.

As a result of DoD's operational reserve policy and the declining "just cause" feature of the current conflict, the reservist must now must consider how much the government needs to pay him or her to volunteer for reserve duty when there is a high risk of mobilization, perhaps three to five times over the course of a career. The simple answer is that the amount needs to be more than what

the reservist now receives from the government. Failure to address the "underpayment" issue has potential negative effects that are widely misunderstood and must be examined to gain a clear appreciation of two major implications. First, the continued "under payment" may likely shrink the reserve supply which has the potential to erode America's ability to maintain an all-volunteer force. Second, the continued "underpayment" may result in DoD overusing the reserves since the cost benefit favors the government instead of the reservist. In order to counter the dangers of "underpayment" and if DoD desires to preserve the all-volunteer reserve force in the future, it must adjust its reserve compensation whenever the potential for mobilization increases.

Compensation Solutions

A recent monograph published by the Rand Corporation, *Rethinking the Reserves*, offers three potential solutions for the underpayment dilemma. The first option is to increase drill pay, which will likely increase the reserve supply at the expense of the active supply and may exacerbate "overpayment" for drilling and "under payment" for mobilization.⁵⁶ The second option is to increase base pay, which may not be effective since doing so could make active duty more attractive than reserve duty and shrink the reserve supply.⁵⁷ The third option is to increase the mobilization pay for reservists. This option may increase the reserve supply at the expense of the active supply, reduce the "under payment" for mobilization, and not exacerbate overpayment for drilling.⁵⁸ DoD may have an opportunity to correct the "underpayment" problem by providing double pay for every day of active duty post-mobilization training.

Of the aforementioned options, option three seems to be the most likely solution for two main reasons. First, since reservists receive double pay for training (drill weekends), a precedent has already been set by paying for training differently.⁵⁹ Second, the option appears viable since most RC mobilizations may require significant post-mobilization training periods, (currently, all reserve units deploying to Afghanistan require 90 days post-mobilization training) since they are

simply not as proficient as their full time AC counterparts. In other words, the reservist will receive double pay during the 90 days post-mobilization period, which directly links compensation to the increased risk of mobilization. The major drawback of this option is that the government will have to budget more funding for mobilization pay, but it does address the increased risk of mobilization issue for the reservist.

A fourth option may address the "underpayment" problem without DoD incurring an additional cost. Current RC compensation incentives include reenlistment and affiliation bonuses, but neither specifically addresses "underpayment" of reservists for the increased risk of mobilization. A potential option to correct the "underpayment" problem is to maintain the status quo (i.e. keep regular drill pay), eliminate or reduce reenlistment and affiliation bonuses, and introduce a mobilization bonus. The cost savings from eliminating or reducing the reenlistment and affiliation bonuses could be used to offer a mobilization bonus which benefits both the government and the reservist. The government benefits by not spending additional money and the reservist benefits since the bonus is specifically linked to the increased risk of mobilization. A recent M&RA reserve retention survey suggests a connection between bonuses and a reservist's intentions to reenlist in the Marine Corps reserve, and in fact, 83.7% of respondents in the FY-2011 survey indicated a reenlistment bonus would influence their decision to stay in the Marine Corps. 60 It could be inferred that a bonus directly tied to mobilization frequency would have a similar positive effect on RC behavior. The actual amount of the mobilization bonus requires further analysis but as a general rule, it should not be excessive since there is potential to offend the active component, yet it must be sufficient enough to address the reservist's concern of being "underpaid" for the increased risk of mobilization. The purpose of presenting these options are not to solve a complex interactive problem within this paper, but to simply illustrate that with some creativity, mutually beneficial solutions can be developed and implemented.

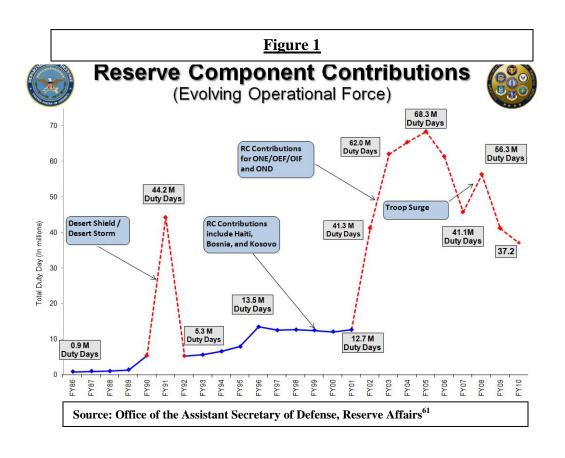
Concluding Thoughts

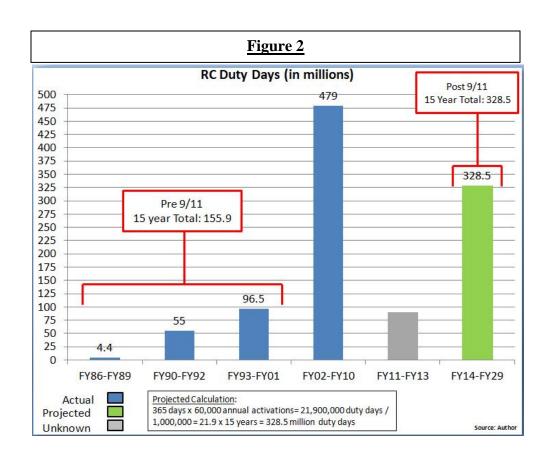
Ambiguity exists as to the future role of the RC after Afghanistan operations come to an end and force reductions are implemented. Options range from reverting the RC back to its strategic roots to the continued operational use of the reserves. A clear definition of an operational reserve is essential to properly inform this decision. However, consensus in defining an operational reserve does not exist in authoritative guidance; Title 10 U.S.C., DoDD 1200.17, and Joint Publication (JP) 1-02 all present conflicting guidance. Furthermore, DoD conducted and published a *Comprehensive Review of the Future Role of the Reserves* report after the DoDD 1200.17 and the 2010 QDR posited the future role of the RC, but all three documents fail to identify the true character of the RC and the "just cause" feature of the current conflict.

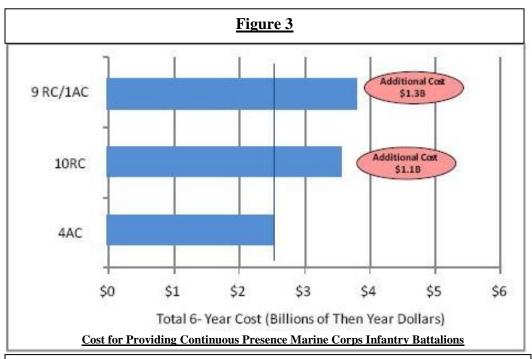
DoD must comprehend and acknowledge that reserves are inherently different than their active duty counterparts. DoD should consider the true character of the RC—its part-time nature—and that any modification to the relationship between reservists and the government should benefit both parties or unintended consequences could emerge that may disrupt America's ability to maintain an all-volunteer reserve force. If DoD desires to employ an operational reserve in the future, it must consider how it intends to maintain a volunteer operational reserve force under antiquated terms when the eagerness and patriotism ("just cause") which have driven RC recruitment and retention over the last decade are no longer present.

Since the end of 2001, DoD enjoyed a volunteer RC eager to serve their country as a result of support for a just cause. DoD should consider the long-term implications of maintaining an operational reserve when patriotic motivations end before establishing any future role of the RC. If the RC is used as an operational reserve after "just cause" ends and the risk of mobilization remains high, there needs to a replacement feature that offsets the negative effects of altering the part-time nature of the RC.

A potential solution to solve this problem rests in compensation reform. RC compensation reform solves the "under payment" issue of the increased risk of mobilization and offers a replacement to the "just cause" feature. RC compensation incentives include reenlistment and affiliation bonuses, but neither specifically addresses "underpayment" of reservists for the increased risk of mobilization. A potential option is to eliminate or reduce reenlistment and affiliation bonuses, and introduce a mobilization bonus which is directly linked to the increased risk of mobilization. This solution will likely enable DoD to maintain an all-volunteer operational reserve in the future since the bonus benefits both DoD and the RC and offers a viable replacement to the "just cause" feature.







Source: Comprehensive Review of the Future Role of The Reserve Component, Vol. II, Annex \mathbf{A}^{62}

Table 1



Reserve Components NOBLE EAGLE / ENDURING FREEDOM

Unique SSAN Activations as of: April 3, 2012

change from last week

(-117)

Currently Activated: 72,109
Deactivated Since 9/11: 773,347

Total: 845,456

Reserve Component			** Current Voluntary Activations	
ARNG	32,342	(-197)	2,109	(+13)
USAR	12,421	(+64)	5,223	(-52)
USNR	4,608	(-81)	60	(+0)
USMCR	3,149	(-69)	1,502	(+6)
ANG	2,419	(+31)	3,434	(-19)
USAFR	1,681	(+100)	2,361	(+61)
USCGR	364	(+17)	436	(+9)
TOTAL	56,984	(-135)	15,125	(+18)
111	- 111	change from last week		hange from last week

Total Current Activate		Total Deactivated Since 9/11
34,451	(-184)	328,467
17,644	(+12)	187,471
4,668	(-81)	46,157
4,651	(-63)	56,612
5,853	(+12)	87,558
4,042	(+161)	59,812
800	(+26)	7,270
72,109	(-117)	773,347
	change from	

Total Activated	
Since 9/11	
362,918	
205,115	
50,825	
61,263	
93,411	
63,854	
8,070	
845,456	

Notes:

Source: Contingency Tracking System (CTS) Daily Processing Files

Produced by the Defense Manpower Data Center

Source: Derived from The Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, Reserve Affairs⁶³

^{*} Includes members placed on Active Duty under 10 USC Sections 688, 12301(a), 12302 and 12304

^{**} Includes members placed on Active Duty under 10 USC 12301(d) and members categorized as unknown in CTS statute code

Table 2					
Survey Question: Your opportunity to activate and deploy for more than 30 days to Afghanistan in support of OEF is a		FY 2010		FY 2011	
Strong Influence to Stay	37.6%	1,114	37.3%	752	
Influence to Stay	38.5%	1,140	40.2%	811	
Influence to Leave	14.6%	434	14.8%	298	
Strong Influence to Leave	9.3%	276	7.7%	155	
Answered Question		2,964		2,016	
Skipped Question		183		981	

Source: Derived from Manpower and Reserve Affairs SMCR retention surveys $(FY\ 10-11)^{64}$

End Notes

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- ⁵Armed Forces, *U.S. Code* 10, §§ 10102.
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²⁴Jad A. Sleiman, "Taking Command, Commander, MarForRes and MarForNorth: LtGen Steven A. Hummer." Continental Marines, Official Magazine of the Marine Corps Reserve, Summer, 2011, 11.

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³¹Ibid., 13.

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⁵⁵Ibid., 45.

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⁵⁸Ibid., 48.

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